

Message Text

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TAGS: ELAB, PINT, UK

SUBJECT: TRADES UNION CONGRESS OPENS

SUMMARY: THE ANNUAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS OPENED SEPTEMBER 5 IN BLACKPOOL. THE CONGRESS, ATTENDED BY AMBASSADOR BREWSTER, HEARD FRATERNAL GREETINGS FROM THE AFL-CIO AND CANADIAN LABOR CONGRESS DELEGATES BEFORE A MOTION WAS PROPOSED CALLING FOR THE EXPULSION OF THE TRANSPORT AND GENERAL WORKERS UNION (TGWU) FROM THE TUC. THE TGWU IS THE LARGEST AFFILIATED UNION AND ACCOUNTS FOR 20 PERCENT OF TUC FINANCES. THE MOTION WAS EVENTUALLY REJECTED, BUT NOT BEFORE SCENES OF UNPRECEDENTED CONFUSION, A SUSPENSION OF CONGRESS ACTIVITIES AND A REVOTE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE TUC OPENED MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 5 IN THE PRESENCE OF AMBASSADOR BREWSTER WHO HAD BEEN WARMLY GREETED BY SENIOR TRADE UNIONISTS. FOLLOWING THE OPENING RITUALISTIC SPEECHES, THE FRATERNAL AFL-CIO DELEGATE JAY C. TURNER ADDRESSED A SOBERLY ATTENTIVE AUDIENCE, SETTING FORTH THE PROPOSITION THAT THE U.S. QUIT THE ILO UNLESS SATISFACTORY SOLUTIONS COULD BE FOUND TO THE PROBLEMS THAT BESET THE ORGANIZATION. SHIRLEY CARR, THE CANADIAN LABOR CONGRESS FRATERNAL DELEGATE, WHO STRESSED THAT THE UNCLASSIFIED

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ILO COULD NOT AFFORD THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE UNITED STATES, RECEIVED WARM APPLAUSE WHEN SHE CALLED FOR TUC SUPPORT FOR CANADIAN EFFORTS TO INSURE THAT THE UNITED STATES REMAIN WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION.

2. THE USUAL QUIET OF THE OPENING DAY WAS SHATTERED WHEN A MOTION WAS PUT BEFORE CONGRESS CALLING FOR

EXPULSION OF THE TWO-MILLION-MEMBER TGWU FROM THE TUC OVER A TWO-YEAR-OLD LOCAL JURISDICTIONAL DISPUTE INVOLVING A BIRMINGHAM PUB. THE TGWU PLEADED INABILITY TO IMPLEMENT THE TUC DISPUTES COMMITTEE DECISION IN FAVOR OF THE SMALL THIRTEEN-THOUSAND-MEMBER NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LICENSED HOUSE MANAGERS AND OFFERED NO CONCESSIONS TO DISCIPLINE ITS REBELLIOUS MEMBERS. THE MAJORITY SYMPATHY VOTE AGAINST "THE BIG UNIONS" AND THE PLATFORM SURPRISED THE CONGRESS AND THREW THE HALL INTO CONFUSION AS DELEGATES BEGAN TO REALIZE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE UNPRECEDENTED CONGRESS DECISION AND A TUC WITHOUT THE TGWU. AFTER HECTIC, HASTY MANEUVERING, UPROAR AND QUESTIONABLE PROCEDURES, INCLUDING ARM TWISTING BY THE GENERAL COUNCIL, ANOTHER VOTE WAS FORCED OVER CONSIDERABLE FLOOR VOCAL DISSENT AND THE TGWU EXPULSION WAS REVERSED BY 7.6 MILLION TO 3.5 MILLION VOTES.

3. THE RESULT OF THE CHAOTIC FIRST DAY LEFT A SIGNIFICANT RESIDUE OF MIXED FEELINGS AMONG THE DELEGATES WHICH MAY CARRY OVER INTO OTHER CONGRESS DISCUSSIONS. THERE WAS OPEN CRITICISM OF THE TUC LEADERSHIP AND CREDIBILITY, PARTICULARLY THE TGWU AS REPRESENTED BY ITS GENERAL SECRETARY, JACK JONES, AND HIS SUCCESSOR MOSS EVANS. THERE WERE STRONG FEELINGS THAT A DOUBLE STANDARD HAD BEEN EVOKED FOR THE POWERFUL UNIONS AS UNCLASSIFIED

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COMPARED WITH THE SMALL ONES (A POINT MADE BY JOE GORMLEY, PRESIDENT OF THE MINERS), ALONG WITH SATISFACTION THAT THE RANK AND FILE HAD REGISTERED ITS AFFECTION WITH THE ESTABLISHED TUC LEADERSHIP. AT THE SAME TIME THERE WAS RELIEF THAT UNPREDICTABLE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR BRITISH TRADE UNIONISM OF THE EXPULSION OF THE TGWU FROM THE TUC AT THIS CRUCIAL CONGRESS HAD BEEN AVOIDED.

BREWSTER

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To: STATE
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